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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
WASHINGTON, D. C.

August 27, 1945

Reserve

MORE TURKEYS AGAIN THIS YEAR

Farmers have produced another record crop of turkeys this year in an attempt to meet the increased demand for turkey meat -- 44,150,000 birds or 22 percent more than the previous record crop of last year and 44 percent larger than the (1937-41) average, according to preliminary estimates just released by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Producers' intentions on January 1 pointed to an 8.5 percent increase in the turkey crop this year. However, favorable weather brought hens into an early lay and started the season off with an early hatch. There were 6 percent more breeder hens on hand than in 1944 yet hatcheries were unable to meet the heavy early demand for poults. To meet the increasing demand hatcheries continued their hatching season at least a month longer than in 1944 and the production of poults was limited only by the supply of hatching eggs.

In most sections of the country, especially in the Southeast, the rate of lay and fertility was exceptionally high and record hatches were made. However, the poult hatching season was not fully satisfactory in all parts of the country. On the Pacific Coast, the weather turned cold and wet after the hens started to lay. As a result, the rate of lay dropped off and egg fertility became poor. After this cold, wet spell the hens failed to recover in egg production and egg fertility. Therefore, many of the flock owners in this area canceled their egg contracts and marketed their hens early. Some of the large breeding flocks in southern Utah were liquidated in early June because of low fertility of eggs.

Hatchery production of poults during the first half of this year was reported as 33 percent above production during the same period in 1944, the largest output in history. This increase is not a true indication of the change in the 1945 turkey crop because an increasing proportion of the poults are coming from hatcheries each year and a relatively smaller proportion are being hatched on farms.

Loss of poults and young turkeys from disease and exposure has been reported to be less than in 1944. Loss from coyotes and other predatory animals, however, is on the increase and accounts for a large proportion of the total loss in many parts of the country. Small flocks which are allowed to roam without adequate protection suffer most from this type of loss.

Most of the increases in turkeys this year were in the larger flocks, where expansion has been going on at an accelerated rate during the past few years. Losses from disease and predatory animals are better controlled in large flocks where poults are raised on wire for 7-8 weeks and then ranged under protection. The number of small flocks has been decreasing because of heavy death losses from disease and especially predatory animals which often wipe out entire small flocks. The old farm method of raising small flocks of turkeys around the farmstead is fast giving way to the more scientific commercialized method of turkey production in large flocks. Turkey production in North Dakota, South Dakota, and some of the Southern States, where small flocks predominate, is now smaller than the average crop produced there during the (1937-41) period even though these States show increases over last year.

California leads all States in turkey production this year with 4,942,000 birds, Texas is second with 4,701,000 and Minnesota third with 4,176,000 birds. Other States ranking in the order named are Oregon, Iowa, Utah, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Nebraska. The three leading States are producing 31 percent of the Nation's turkey crop, while the 10 leading States are producing 62 percent. Production increased this year in all States except Louisiana and Montana, where there was no change from last year. The largest percentage increases in production compared with last year are 50 percent in Indiana and 40 percent in

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Illinois. The Middle Atlantic States of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania show increases of 37, 35, and 30 percent, respectively.

Increases above a year ago by geographic divisions are 30 percent in the North Atlantic, 29 percent in the East North Central, 25 percent in the South Atlantic, 22 percent in the South Central, 20 percent in the West North Central, and 17 percent in the West, where conditions have been less favorable because of a cold, wet spring.

Marketings Earliest of Record

Turkey marketings are expected to be the earliest in 10 years of record. If producers carry out their intentions this year, October or earlier marketings will be 19.5 percent of the crop compared with the previous high October marketings of 16.6 percent last year. The trend toward the production of earlier birds from January and February poults has developed during the last 4 years mainly because early birds are easier to raise with smaller death losses, and the Army has been paying a premium for early birds for shipment to service men in other countries.

The practice of raising early turkeys will no doubt continue because the demand for these birds is increasing and it is more profitable to raise early turkeys in many parts of the country. However, the increasing demand for year-round turkey dinners in hotels and restaurants has fostered the production of heavy broad-breasted birds for the freezer market. These birds are fed longer in order to attain heavier weights. In the Pacific Coast States, where this type of production is more highly developed, over 1/4 of the crop is marketed after January 1 compared with only about 1/8 of the crop so marketed for the country as a whole.

Growers expect to market about 37.9 percent of the crop in November this year, compared with 38.7 percent reported as marketed a year earlier. However, the marketing intentions through November this year are 57.4 percent of the crop, compared with 55.3 percent marketed last year. Christmas and New Year markets are expected to receive 30.0 percent of marketings compared with 30.9 percent last year and the after-holiday market 12.6 percent compared with 13.8 percent last year.

The actual proportions that will move in successive months will depend to a considerable extent upon later developments. Actual marketings may vary somewhat from intended marketings. In 1942 and 1943, actual marketings were about the same as intended while in all other years since 1938 they were somewhat later. In 1944, actual marketings through November were lighter than intended and considerably more birds were held for marketing after January 1. Intended marketings this season may be realized because this year's turkey crop is fairly early and the government is paying a premium for early birds.

The largest early marketing will be in the West North Central States, where 32.0 percent of the 1945 turkeys in this area are intended for the October or earlier market. The South Atlantic States expect to market 21.8 percent of their crop in October or earlier; the West 17.8 percent, the North Atlantic 12.5 percent, the East North Central 12.2 percent and the South Central States only 6.0 percent.

The percent of the crop intended for the Thanksgiving market varies from 46.0 percent in the South Central States to 32.7 percent in the West. The largest percentage of marketings after the end of the year is the 22.2 percent reported in the West, where a relatively large proportion of the market birds are of the broad-breasted type raised to heavy weights for hotel and restaurant trade. The South Atlantic States report the smallest relative marketings after January 1, or 5.7 percent of their crop.

TURKEYS RAISED ON FARMS, 1945 WITH COMPARISONS

State and Division	Number raised					
	Average	1942	1943	1944 1/	Indicated	1945 as %
	1937-41				1945 2/	of 1944
			Thousands			Percent
Me.	46	48	43	43	52	121
N.H.	54	69	64	71	92	130
Vt.	127	145	142	159	207	130
Mass.	216	240	216	227	272	120
R.I.	22	25	26	30	35	117
Conn.	95	114	117	146	185	127
N.Y.	372	420	386	428	586	137
N.J.	127	138	160	192	259	135
Pa.	739	1,020	1,071	1,285	1,670	130
N.Atl.	1,799	2,219	2,225	2,581	3,358	130.1
Ohio	760	896	851	979	1,126	115
Ind.	381	394	453	612	918	150
Ill.	509	662	609	828	1,159	140
Mich.	463	481	519	612	826	135
Wis.	400	504	554	692	761	110
E.N.Cent.	2,513	2,937	2,986	3,723	4,790	128.7
Minn.	2,642	3,207	2,983	3,341	4,176	125
Iowa	1,581	1,729	1,867	2,147	2,576	120
Mo.	1,352	1,359	1,332	1,532	1,838	120
N.Dak.	1,424	1,212	945	992	1,042	105
S.Dak.	1,106	950	551	413	496	120
Nebr.	891	1,200	1,140	1,208	1,450	120
Kans.	1,082	1,064	958	948	1,138	120
W.N.Cent.	10,079	10,721	9,776	10,581	12,716	120.2
Del.	111	113	102	107	123	115
Md.	403	405	364	400	480	120
Va.	784	902	857	986	1,232	125
W.Va.	218	270	235	254	318	125
N.C.	230	268	241	277	360	130
S.C.	144	155	256	307	414	135
Ga.	112	140	168	168	202	120
Fla.	113	115	120	118	142	120
S.Atl.	2,115	2,368	2,343	2,617	3,271	125.0
Ky.	312	310	254	267	299	112
Tenn.	200	196	200	190	200	105
Ala.	131	170	170	144	156	108
Miss.	123	143	129	111	113	102
Ark.	118	140	126	132	152	115
La.	65	73	77	69	69	100
Okla.	1,506	1,122	954	954	1,192	125
Tex.	4,034	3,724	3,724	3,761	4,701	125
S.Cent.	6,490	5,878	5,634	5,628	6,882	122.3
Mont.	265	276	246	253	253	100
Idaho	230	273	218	272	340	125
Wyo.	216	176	167	167	199	119
Colo.	858	888	861	861	990	115
N.Mex.	63	55	55	52	57	110
Ariz.	71	81	89	93	107	115
Utah	739	1,166	1,341	1,743	1,952	112
Nev.	51	25	35	40	51	128
Wash.	683	1,096	1,206	1,387	1,637	118
Oreg.	1,579	1,812	2,084	2,084	2,605	125
Calif.	2,971	3,139	3,704	4,260	4,942	116
West	7,727	8,987	10,006	11,212	13,133	117.1
U. S.	30,723	33,110	32,970	36,342	44,150	121.5

1/ Revised. 2/ Preliminary estimates as of August 1, 1945.

PROPORTION OF TURKEY CROP MARKETED IN DIFFERENT MONTHS
(Reporters' averages)

Geographic Divisions	1944 Crop				1945 Crop (intended)			
	Oct. or earlier	Nov.	Dec.	Jan. or later	Oct. or earlier	Nov.	Dec.	Jan. or later
	Percent							
N. Atlantic	9.0	44.2	36.3	10.5	12.5	43.2	34.5	9.8
E.N. Central	9.9	44.7	36.8	8.6	12.2	45.3	33.8	8.7
W.N. Central	30.8	37.8	24.3	7.1	32.0	34.9	25.2	7.9
S. Atlantic	20.1	41.2	33.7	5.0	21.8	40.0	32.5	5.7
S. Central	6.4	47.9	35.8	9.9	6.0	46.0	39.2	8.8
Western	11.4	31.4	31.1	26.1	17.8	32.7	27.3	22.2
United States	16.6	38.7	30.9	13.8	19.5	37.9	30.0	12.6

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